

## TAB 4—STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997* (IDEA) requires the development of policies and procedures for the inclusion of students with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments and, where necessary, the provision of accommodations for such students. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must include accommodations that are necessary in order for the child to participate in those assessments. A student who is perceived to have a disability based on Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504) must also be afforded accommodations if those accommodations are part of the services provided in the student's Section 504 plan. For the expected small number of students whose participation cannot be accommodated, the Statewide Team-led Alternate Assessment and Reporting System (STAARS) will take the place of the state- and district-wide assessment. The IEP team must document their decision on the IEP.

Decisions about the nature and extent of involvement of students who cannot participate in state- or district-wide assessments under the prescribed standardized group testing conditions recommended by the test publisher should be made on an **individual** basis by the student's IEP or Section 504 team. Decisions about accommodations should not be made unilaterally; the team involved in the decision-making process should be made up of the people who know the student the best.

#### Understanding the Terms “Accommodations” and “Modifications”

An “**accommodation**” is a change in the test's attributes which is necessary to provide access for a student with a disability to participate in the test. **It does not fundamentally alter or lower the standards or expectations of the test and does not invalidate the test.** An accommodation levels the playing field. It changes the test but does not fundamentally alter it. (Freedman)

A “**modification**” is a change in the test's attributes which is necessary to provide access for a student with a disability to participate in the test. **It fundamentally alters or lowers the standards or expectations of the test.** A modification changes the playing field. It changes the test and fundamentally alters it. (Freedman)

#### Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the provision of assessment accommodations or participation in the *Dakota STEP*, please contact Special Education Program Representative Linda Turner at 605-773-3678.

## Guidelines for Making Decisions About Accommodations

Accommodations in the instructional process should be used, when necessary, for assessing students. Accommodations in test administration are provided to allow students with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their aptitude and achievement in testing situations rather than to reflect their impairment. Although test accommodations provide students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, they do not guarantee equal outcomes.

An appropriate or reasonable accommodation should not interfere with the interpretation of a student's score. For example, allowing a student with a learning disability in reading to have word problems read to him or her during the math test is an appropriate accommodation for this student because a math skill, not a reading skill, is being assessed. However, reading the *Reading Comprehension* test to this same student would be an inappropriate accommodation because reading comprehension is the skill being assessed, not listening comprehension. No accommodation should interfere with the accurate interpretation of a score.

Professional judgment and experience play important roles in any decision concerning which accommodation is needed, the extent to which it is needed, and for which student. Listed below are some general guidelines for the IEP or Section 504 teams to consider in determining accommodations for individual students.

- ☐ Does the accommodation fit the student's instructional process and areas of strength and weakness rather than the category of disability? (For example, not all students with learning disabilities have reading problems and therefore, not all require that math problems be read to them.)
- ☐ Does the student's IEP or 504 Plan call for the same or a similar accommodation for class work?
- ☐ Is this an accommodation that is typically provided for the student during instruction and assessment in the general classroom?
- ☐ Is the student sufficiently skilled to use this accommodation with ease or will the accommodation serve as an impediment? This question is especially pertinent when considering the use of technology or assistive technology devices. (For example, a student is allowed to use a word processor as an accommodation during testing, but the student is not sufficiently skilled to use it with ease, speed, and confidence, thereby hampering his or her performance.)
- ☐ Is the accommodation **necessary** for this child? (For example, a student with ADD/ADHD who reads well may not need math problems read to him or her but may require small-group administration of the test so the teacher can keep the student on task.)

## STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS FOR IEP AND 504 PLAN STUDENTS

### Timing/Scheduling

#### **Time of day most beneficial to students**

Some students with health problems and/or medication schedules benefit by being tested at particular times of the day (e.g., first thing in the morning, immediately following medication). It is permissible to test at a time that is most beneficial to the student.

#### **Frequent breaks within a subtest**

If factors such as mental and/or physical fatigue or disruptive behavior present a problem, it is acceptable to plan breaks within one sitting of the test administration or to spread out test activities over several sittings. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that students do not have an opportunity to share and/or compare test information during breaks that are provided.

### Setting for Administration

#### **Test individually**

Students may be tested individually, as necessary, for teacher supervision and support and/or for the provision of other accommodations. If it is likely that a student will be easily distracted or disruptive during the test administration, it would be appropriate to test that student individually. If a student becomes disruptive unexpectedly during testing, it is permissible to remove the student from the test setting so that other students may proceed with the test undisturbed. The disruptive student should be calmed down and the test continued separately, whenever possible.

#### **Home/Hospital**

If a student on an IEP or 504 Plan is unable to participate in the assessment at the school, it is acceptable to send school personnel to the student to administer the test.

#### **Environmental Modifications**

Students should be tested using the adaptive or special furniture that they normally use in the course of daily instruction (e.g., special tables, chairs, slant boards).

Students may be tested using special lighting, amplification, or noise-buffering devices as necessary and employed for classroom instruction and as outlined in their IEPs.

### Presentation Format

**Braille and Large-print (18-point text)** versions of the *Dakota STEP* test booklets and enlarged answer documents are available for students who are visually impaired. Test materials will be sent separately to examiners administering Braille and/or large-print versions of the test. As soon as the need for such accommodations is identified, requests for Braille and large-print test versions should be communicated to Dawn L. Smith at 605-773-2535 or Linda Turner at 605-773-3678.

**Sign Language Interpreters** may assist in test administration by giving directions and clarifying information as provided in the *Directions for Administering*. Students who are deaf or hearing-impaired may have the *Dakota STEP* administered individually.

**Talking Calculators** may be used as long as the student is tested individually or with the use of headphones.

**Readers** may be provided to allow students with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their aptitude and achievement in testing situations rather than reflecting their impairment. For example, allowing a student with dyslexia to have word problems read to him or her during the math test is an appropriate accommodation for this student because math skills, not reading, are being assessed. However, reading the *Reading Comprehension* test to this same student would be an inappropriate accommodation because reading comprehension is the skill being assessed. Therefore, reading the *Reading Comprehension* test aloud creates a listening comprehension test.

Readers may only be provided when necessary for the following subtests:

*Reading Vocabulary,*  
*Mathematics Problem Solving and Procedures* (grades 4 through 8),  
*Mathematics* (grade 11),  
*Language,*  
*Science, and*  
*Social Science.*

## **Response Format**

### **Transcription of Student Responses**

This accommodation is available for students who are unable to mark their answers on the regular-print, machine-scorable, *Dakota STEP* answer document.

School personnel may grid students' verbal responses to multiple-choice items on the regular-print, machine-scorable answer document.

School personnel may transcribe students' responses marked in the test booklets and/or on the large-print answer documents to the regular-print, machine-scorable answer document.

## Standard Accommodations for IEP and 504 Plan Students For the *Dakota STEP*

### **Timing/Scheduling**

- Time of day most beneficial to students
- Frequent breaks within a subtest

### **Setting/Administration**

- Test individually
- Home/hospital setting
- Environmental Modifications:  
Special lighting, adaptive furniture, noise buffers, carrels, special seating
- Sign language (ASL, cued speech) for directions

### **Presentation Format**

- Large-print (18 pt. text)
- Repeating directions
- Simplifying directions
- Visual aids (magnifiers, templates)
- Audio amplification equipment
- Audio tape, excluding *Reading Comprehension*
- Talking calculators are allowed for the *Mathematics Problem Solving* subtest at grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 as well as grade 11 *Mathematics* (only limited text entry such as some scientific and graphing calculators)
- Readers are allowed for the *Reading Vocabulary*, *Mathematics (Problem Solving and Procedures)*, *Language, Science, and Social Science* subtests
- Readers may NOT read the *Reading Comprehension* Passages, however; they may read the *Reading Comprehension* questions.
- Abacus for visually impaired (VI) students
- Sign language (ASL, cued speech) for directions
- Braille

### **Response Format**

- Visual aids (graph paper, templates, rulers)
- Special pencil, pen, pencil grip
- Tape recorded response
- Auditory aids
- Bubbler
- Braille

### **Other**

- Augmentive, assistive, or adaptive technology

## ADMINISTERING THE *DAKOTA STEP* LARGE-PRINT VERSION

Large-print versions of the *Dakota STEP* are available for visually-impaired students whose IEP's call for such test materials. The large-print test booklets are enlargements of the regular-print test booklets that are produced in black and white. No changes have been made to the items or to the number of items. However, when necessary for clarity and readability, the art has been adapted or revised.

There are no separate norms for interpreting the scores of students who are administered large-print versions of the *Dakota STEP*. The standard published norms are used. Reports resulting from the administration of the large-print versions will be identical to all other South Dakota School Testing Program reports.

The large-print versions of the test will be sent to each district that requests large-print test materials. For each large-print test ordered, the district must have on file a copy of each student's IEP or 504 Plan that indicates visual accommodations.

The large-print test booklets are assigned a security number for inventory purposes. Like all other test forms, the large-print versions must be kept secure in a locked area when not in use. Teachers/Examiners must sign the *Test Security Affidavit* and return it to the Test Coordinator prior to testing. The Test Coordinator should assign the appropriate large-print test booklets to each building. The shipment will include one copy of procedures for each large-print test. If the correct number of large-print tests is not received, or if there is a problem with the security number assignments, call your Harcourt Program Coordinator at (800) 800-8305, extension 5652.

Students testing with the large-print version should have sufficient work space to accommodate an open 11" x 17" test book. Special consideration should also be given to lighting conditions for low-vision students.

In most cases, a student's sight/vision disability precludes his/her ability to use a regular-print, machine-scorable answer document. The Teacher/Examiner and the student should determine the best method for the student to record responses to the test items.

A student may mark directly on the large-print test booklet or large-print answer document with a pencil, pen, crayon, or respond in typewriting. After testing is complete, the Teacher/Examiner must then transcribe the student's responses to a regular-print, machine-scorable, *Dakota STEP* answer document.

If a student is tested individually, he or she can respond orally to the Teacher/Examiner who should mark the student's responses on a regular-print, machine-scorable, *Dakota STEP* answer document as the test is administered.

Teachers/Examiners must ensure that the student identification information on the *Dakota STEP* answer document is completed accurately by marking the Large Print bubble and completing the necessary information in the Administration box.

The large-print test booklets, non-scorable answer documents, and all other large-print test materials must be kept separate from the regular test materials and returned to the Test Coordinator after testing is complete. The scorable answer documents transcribed for students testing with large-print versions of the *Dakota STEP* are to be placed with the regular-print answer documents, within classroom/grade, and by building. The Test Coordinator should check the inside of each large-print test booklet to ensure that the regular-print, machine scorable answer document has been removed.

## **ADMINISTERING THE *DAKOTA STEP* BRAILLE VERSION**

Braille versions of the *Dakota STEP* are available for students whose IEPs call for such test materials. Items that cannot be Brailled without modifications have been identified and either eliminated due to practical necessity, or revised in order to make translation possible. Raw score to scaled-score conversions have been developed ONLY for the tests in which some of the original items were deleted. The scaled scores for the remaining tests are determined using the same tables that are used for regular scoring.

The Braille versions of the *Dakota STEP* will be sent to each district that requested Braille testing materials. For each Braille test ordered, the district must have on file a copy of each student's IEP or 504 Plan that indicates visual accommodations.

All volumes of each Braille test are packaged together and assigned a security number for inventory purposes. Like all other test forms, the Braille versions must be kept secure in a locked area when not in use. Teachers/Examiners must sign a *Test Security Affidavit* and return it to the Test Coordinator prior to testing. The Test Coordinator should assign the appropriate Braille test booklets to each building. The shipment of test materials will include one copy of procedures for each Braille test. If the correct number of Braille tests is not received, or if there is a problem with the security number assignments, call your Harcourt Program Coordinator at (800) 800-8305, extension 5652.

Before beginning each subtest, Teachers/Examiners should provide students with all materials and equipment needed for testing (e.g., low-vision aids, slate and stylus, Cranmer modified abacus, Braille writers/typewriters). The Teacher/Examiner should have available Braille paper, typing paper, pens, pencils, crayons, and place holders.

In most situations, a student's sight/vision disability precludes the ability to use a regular-print, machine-scorable answer document. In such cases, the Teacher/Examiner and the student should determine the best method for the student to record responses to the test items.

A student may mark directly on the Braille book with a pencil, pen, or crayon. The student may respond in handwriting, typewriting, or Braille. When the student completes the test, his or her answers must be transcribed to a regular-print, machine-scorable, *Dakota STEP* answer document. The Teacher/Examiner must ensure that the transcribed responses are in direct correlation to the question being answered. The

response to a specific question must be transcribed to that specific question's answer grid on the regular-print, machine-scorable, *Dakota STEP* answer document.

A student may be tested individually in a setting where an oral response can be given to the Teacher/Examiner. In such cases, the Teacher/Examiner will mark the student's responses directly on the regular-print, machine scorable, *Dakota STEP* answer document. The response to a specific question must be marked on that specific question's answer grid on the regular-print, machine-scorable, *Dakota STEP* answer document.

Teachers/Examiners must ensure that the student identification information on the *Dakota STEP* answer document is completed accurately by marking the Braille bubble and completing the necessary information in the Administration box.

The Braille test booklets and all other Braille test materials must be kept separate from the regular test materials and returned to the Test Coordinator after testing is complete. The scorable answer documents transcribed for students testing with Braille versions of the *Dakota STEP* are to be placed with the regular-print answer documents, within classroom/grade, and by building. The Test Coordinator should check the inside of each Braille test booklet to ensure that the regular-print, machine scorable answer document has been removed.

### **Returning Braille and Large-print *Dakota STEP* Test Materials**

#### **BRILLE AND LARGE-PRINT SCORABLE ANSWER DOCUMENTS**

The scorable answer documents transcribed for students tested with the Braille and large-print versions of the *Dakota STEP* should be placed on top of the stack of regular-print scorable answer documents (by classroom/grade) and included in the NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS section of the SSID sheet.

#### **BRILLE AND LARGE-PRINT TEST MATERIALS**

ALL Braille test booklets, large-print test booklets, and large-print answer documents should be returned to  
**JR Zengler**  
**c/o Harcourt Assessment**  
**19500 Bulverde Road**  
**San Antonio, TX 78259**



## SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

**The U. S. Department of Education expects most students with disabilities to participate in regular statewide assessments either without accommodations or with appropriate accommodations that are consistent with the accommodations provided during regular instruction.**

In exceptional circumstances, there may be a student whose disabilities are such that the allowable accommodations listed in this document will be insufficient to provide access to the *Dakota STEP*. In these cases, the district will need to complete the *Dakota STEP Special Accommodation Consideration Request* form. The South Dakota Department of Education and Harcourt will determine whether the request is for an accommodation or a modification of the *Dakota STEP*, and instructions will be provided to you as to how to properly code the student's answer document. An allowable accommodation does not invalidate the student's score and can be coded as a standard allowable accommodation. A modification invalidates the student's score and must be coded as a non-standard accommodation which will yield a below basic score.

The *Dakota STEP Special Accommodation Consideration Request* form is provided on page 7 and 8 of this section or at <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/Special/forms/index.htm>. You may email your completed form to Linda Turner at [linda.turner@state.sd.us](mailto:linda.turner@state.sd.us) or complete and fax the form to 605-773-3782.

**SINCE EVERY STUDENT IS DIFFERENT AND DISABILITIES AFFECT STUDENTS IN DIFFERENT WAYS, ANY TESTING ACCOMMODATION MADE AVAILABLE TO ONE STUDENT SHOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE APPLIED UNIVERSALLY.**

## ***Dakota STEP Special Accommodation Consideration Request***

If your student on an IEP is currently using an accommodation not listed as an allowable standard accommodation for the *Dakota STEP*, you may submit a request to use that accommodation during the *Dakota STEP* administration. Please complete the following form and return it to Linda Turner at [linda.turner@state.sd.us](mailto:linda.turner@state.sd.us) or fax to 605-773-3782 **no later than March 10, 2005**.

Remember, the student must have been using the accommodation during instruction prior to the *Dakota STEP* administration and the student should be familiar with the required accommodation. If it is determined by the South Dakota Department of Education that your request for an accommodation will not invalidate the student's score you will be instructed to bubble only the IEP classification bubble in the Administration box on the demographics sheet. If it is determined that your request is actually for a modification that would invalidate the student's subtest score(s) instead of an accommodation, you will be instructed to grid the appropriate subtest(s) as non-standard subject accommodation(s) on the demographics sheet. All questions must be completed in order for your request to be considered. Responses will be e-mailed or faxed after receipt of the request.

**Accommodations** are changes made to the assessment procedures in order to provide a student with access to information and an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills without affecting the reliability or validity of the assessment.

**Modifications** are changes in what a student is expected to know. Modifications alter the instruction level, content and/or performance expectations required of the student. Reading the reading assessment to a student is a modification.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

District/School \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student SIMS number \_\_\_\_\_

(Page 1 of 2)

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student SIMS number \_\_\_\_\_

Before submitting this accommodation form, are you sure there are no accommodations listed in the allowable standard accommodations chart that might be used instead of the special accommodation requested?

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No** (a Special Accommodation request is NOT appropriate.)

**Describe the accommodation you are requesting:**

Was this accommodation agreed upon at the IEP meeting when discussing statewide assessment?

☐ **Yes** (proceed to next question)

☐ **No** (a Special Accommodation request is NOT appropriate.)

**How is this accommodation documented?**

**How does this accommodation “level the playing field” for this student?**

Is this an accommodation that is typically provided for the student during instruction and assessment in the general classroom?

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

**I am requesting this accommodation for the following content area(s) of the *Dakota STEP*.**

☐ **Math**

☐ **Reading**

☐ **Language Arts**

☐ **Science**

☐ **Social Studies**